

B²

feeding and loading is made easier by the bags being orientated in the same direction. - -

2. Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 2 with the following rewritten paragraph:

B³

- - Each chamber has a respective entrance 6a, 6b, 6c, and 6d and exit 7a, 7b, 7c, and 7d. Opening and closing of the vacuum chambers is described in more detail subsequently. - -

3. Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 18 with the following rewritten paragraph:

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- - A fixed input conveyor 10 is provided to receive unsealed product packages 2 into the machine 1 from station 14 along packaging line 13 and supply them to the in-feed conveyor 8. Another fixed output conveyor 11 receives sealed packages from the out-feed conveyor 9 and outputs them along line 13. - -

4. Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 30 with the following rewritten paragraph:

B⁵

- - As an arbitrary starting point within the cycle, we can take the point at which the vacuum sealing operation in the lower vacuum chamber 4a has just finished. At this time, the vacuum sealing operation in the upper vacuum chamber 4b is underway. The lower vacuum chamber 4a is opened. Next, the fixed conveyors 10, 11, the in-feed and out-feed conveyors 8, 9 and the lower chamber conveyor 5a are simultaneously operated (i) to load lower vacuum chamber 4a with new unsealed product packages 2 from the in-feed conveyor 8, (ii) to unload sealed product packages from the lower vacuum chamber 4a onto the out-feed conveyor 9, and (iii) to supply new unsealed product packages 2 onto the in-feed conveyor 8. Exact synchronization is preferable but some degree of overlap is desirable. The lower vacuum chamber 4a is then closed for commencement of the vacuum sealing operation, that is vacuumization of the chamber 4a and sealing of the product packages 2 by sealing bar 12. - -

5. Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 8, line 10 with the following rewritten paragraph:

B⁶

- - During the vacuum sealing operation in the lower vacuum chamber 4a, loading and unloading of the upper vacuum chamber 5 is performed. The out-feed conveyor 9 is operated briefly to clear sealed products off it. Then the in-feed and out-feed conveyors 8, 9 are raised to the upper vacuum chamber 4b and when the vacuum sealing operation in the upper vacuum chamber 4b has finished, the upper vacuum chamber 4b is opened. Simultaneous operation of the in-feed and out-feed conveyors 8, 9 and the upper chamber conveyor 5b loads and unloads the upper vacuum chamber 4b. - -